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THE ETHNIC CULTURE SURVEY REPORT of
THE MIDDLE STATES CONFERENCE on
FOLK CULTURE

In the fall of 1966 the General Assembly of Pennsylvania passed legislation enabling the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to establish the Ethnic Culture Survey, a program designed to collect, organize and publish information on the folk cultures in Pennsylvania. MacEdward Leach, internationally recognized ballad scholar who died in early July was the consultant for the program and provided it with much of its impetus and current direction. Henry Glassie, a student of Dr. Leach's, has been placed in charge of the Survey and supplied with the intriguing title, state folklorist.

Pennsylvania is rich in groups and individuals devoted at least partially to the study of folk culture. The Survey has no desire to take these over; rather, it plans to make the public more aware of the richness and diversity of folk culture, to guide the amateur into a more careful study, and to assist the scholar in his work.

During the first eight months of the Survey's existence, modern concepts of folklore were carried to the public through radio and television programs, articles in newspapers and magazines, and talks to local societies. Traditional singers, tale-tellers and craftsmen from Pennsylvania, most of whom had never before performed in public, were taken to the late April meeting of the Pennsylvania Federation of Junior Historians and to the American Folklife Festival held over Independence Day week-end in Washington, D. C. The Survey functioned as a consultant to two groups - one in the eastern part of the state and one in the west - requesting federal finances; both proposals, as a result, contain a folk cultural emphasis which should lead to an increased awareness by teachers and students of Pennsylvania's traditions.

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In the spring the Ethnic Culture Survey was asked by the Smithsonian Institution to assist in planning and conducting an international interdisciplinary conference on folklife. Scholars from such diverse fields as geography, architectural history, anthropology and folklore, and from Switzerland, Ireland and Mexico as well as from many parts of the United States met in Washington, July 2 and 3. The Survey was largely responsible for inviting the scholars, arranging for their honoraria, and planning the meetings. A report of the conference will be edited by the Survey. Other interested groups with a desire to do more and better work in the field of folklife contacted the Survey, and, accordingly, it helped plan the conference which accompanied the Festival held at Historic Schaefferstown at the end of July.

To assist amateur collectors of folk cultural information in Pennsylvania, the Survey has prepared a guide which is currently in press. It begins with some suggestions on how to go about collecting and includes some samples of Pennsylvania traditions drawn from publications and unpublished manuscript and field data, and an introductory bibliography. It will be given to anyone interested in doing fieldwork within the state and sold at a nominal price to others who would wish a copy.

The Survey plans to maintain a collection of organized information on Pennsylvania's folk cultures which will be available to interested individuals. Material for the collection has begun to accumulate with the donation to the Survey of a large number of manuscripts dealing with nineteenth century folklife in York County, tapes of riverboat folklore from western Pennsylvania, a manuscript on Lancaster County place names, data on a Polish composer of miners' songs, as well as many assorted items on folk architecture, tales, children's lore, and songs. The Collection will house all kinds of material on Pennsylvania folklife, but the Survey's own research will be restricted to areas which have received little study, such as the traditions of the more recent immigrants and folk crafts. Fieldwork in both of these areas has been begun. In the future it is hoped that the Survey will be able to provide funds for full-time fieldworkers and, with the data which is assembled, produce educational materials, museum exhibits, and scholarly monographs. Applications have been made for funds to implement these plans and to hold a festival in Harrisburg composed of only genuine Pennsylvania tradition bearers--dancers, singers, tale-tellers, musicians, and craftsmen.

One of the Survey's primary goals is to act as a coordinator and communications channel for people working in folklore and allied fields. An address list of people with an interest in folklife is being built up and this will be indexed by interests and works in progress. The Survey is always interested in receiving information for this file. As a first step in this direction the Survey and the Pennsylvania Folklore Society co-sponsored a meeting, The Middle States Conference on Folk Culture, at the William Penn Memorial Museum in Harrisburg on April 15, 1967. To continue the spirit of cooperation engendered at this meeting, which almost one hundred attended, a report of this meeting has been edited. This report, which follows, is being sent to all who attended the meeting (whose addresses can be obtained from the Survey) and to others who might be interested.

The morning session was open to anyone who wished to report current private or institutional folk cultural activities within Pennsylvania and neighboring states. An abstract of that session is given here. The quoted sections are direct transcriptions from the tape recording made of the meeting; sections are quoted because of the particular interest of a statement or because the statement was made as concisely as it could be abstracted. A few individuals who could not make it sent in reports prior to the meeting; these are included as they would have scheduled had the individuals been able to attend. The order of presentation is rearranged slightly in order to make the report read a bit more logically.

DONALD H. KENT, director, Bureau of Archives and History, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission: The Bureau of Archives and History has been broadened to include the Ethnic Culture Survey. This will make it possible for us to study Pennsylvania's folk cultures in which we have been interested for some time.

KENNETH S. GOLDSTEIN, Department of Folklore and Folklife, University of Pennsylvania: Presently the Department consists of Don Yoder, Tristram P. Coffin and myself. This fall Dan Ben Amos will join the staff to teach courses which have been unavailable and to organize our archives. We are planning to establish an institute for training fieldworkers in the behavioral sciences. Folklore will be one of the five groups involved; "the idea being that, for example, folklore students will also be taking field training in linguistics, sociology and psychology." Annually, we make a little progress with the administration; this year they supplied us with fifteen fellowships.

WARREN E. ROBERTS, Folklore Institute, Indiana University: The Folklore Institute has a faculty of four full-time folklorists and a number of others who share appointments. Recently, we have been bringing visiting professors to the Institute; currently, Roger Pinon from Liege, Belgium, is with us. We have a centrally located, indexed Folklore Archive of materials contributed primarily by the students, and an Archive of Folk and Primitive Music, the core of which was brought from Columbia by George Herzog. It began with the music of nonliterate people but now includes all kinds of traditional music. It publishes a bulletin, The Archivist. Our research is not restricted to the "oral forms of folklore." A Museum of Folklore, Anthropology and History has been begun which includes many examples of the traditional material culture of the United States. It has been assigned a 65 acre tract on the outskirts of Bloomington for an outdoor museum. The Museum already owns a covered bridge and two log houses. There are museums in the United States "which very closely approximate the European folk museums, such as Old Sturbridge Village, but there are not very many that are connected with the universities in this country. In Europe, by and large, there is always a close connection between the folk museum and a university because of the importance of the interrelationship between the research program which the university carries out and the accumulation of the material by the museum. Pretty obviously museum items


cannot be displayed adequately unless the directors have a good notion of how they were used, the history behind them and so on." I will offer a museum connected course entitled "Folk Arts, Crafts and Architecture."

GEORGE CAREY, English Department, University of Maryland: Folklore was established as a part of the English Department at Maryland as far back as 1947 when Franklin Cooley introduced the subject with the help of Duncan Emrich. Between 1947 and 1963 Cooley directed a number of dissertations relevant to folklore. Two of his students, Drs. Esther Birdsall and Douglas McMillan, are presently teaching folklore courses and I am teaching one on folk narrative. I hope we will eventually be able to offer a master's degree in folklore. This fall there will be two new folklore courses, and I will be teaching on the Eastern Shore in connection with a long term collecting project. With the help of Joseph Hickerson at the Library of Congress I have guided students into the field; the material they have collected along with that accumulated by the faculty, will form the basis of an archive.

RICHARD E. BUEHLER, English Department, Bowling Green State University, Ohio: Bowling Green offers a master's degree in folklore. It has a small archive, composed of student and faculty collectanea. The Journal of the Ohio Folklore Society is edited at Bowling Green. The third issue of the year will include the papers delivered at the Society's last meeting. For the fourth issue we are planning to locate and describe many of the individual and institutional archives around Ohio.

RALPH RINZLER, Newport Foundation; consultant to the Smithsonian Institution: Over the fourth of July the Smithsonian is going to hold a four day festival on the National Mall which will include music, crafts and dance. At the same time the Smithsonian and the Ethnic Culture Survey are planning to conduct an interdisciplinary conference on American folklife. The proceedings of the conference will be edited and published. This report, it is hoped, will provide the basis for a feasibility study of a National Folklife Institute. This Institute would coordinate and initiate fieldwork programs in folk culture resulting in a monograph series analogous to that of the Bureau of American Ethnology. It would hold an annual festival of traditional performers, establish regional festivals, maintain a folk film archive, and act as a consulting body for educational groups and government agencies working in areas where folk cultural expertise is essential to the integrity of the final product. The study would also investigate the problems inherent in maintaining a folk company to visit foreign countries, and establishing a national outdoor folk museum.

SARAH GERTRUDE KNOTT, National Folk Festival Association, Washington, D. C.: We have presented twenty-nine folk festivals. We have a grant through the National Council on the Arts to hold an annual festival



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in the East and the West. I just returned from a tour of eight states and feel that the new American groups are preserving their traditions better than the older groups. "I had a letter from MacEdward Leach the other day and he said that this year's festival -- he is on the Board of the Festival -- should be altogether traditional, and he went on to give the reasons why. Of course, we all know why. But, I told him that it simply can't be done because nobody will agree as to what is exactly traditional The tragic and sad and very definite need we have in this country is to have a meeting of the scholars and practitioners to go deeply into whether or not we can hold to the basic folk traditions or whether they are bound to pass when a new civilization comes."

GEORGE SIMPSON, National Folk Festival Association: We are also setting up a calendar of events and planning to assist the smaller festivals.

ROGER PINON, Liege, Belgium: The problem of cooperation between scholars and festival organizers is being discussed in Europe, especially in Czechoslovakia, Germany and Belgium. "There are two directions. There are those who want to perform any kind of folk dancing from anywhere, so, today, they are performing dances from Israel and Yugoslavia as well as their own country. And, there are those who are trying to revive the dances of their own region. It is here that the collaboration of the scholar is necessary." Dance scholarship in the United States is not well advanced. The educationalists need scholarly studies before they can go to work. The requirements for folk festivals must be strict. I have been an adjudicator at folk dance festivals and the first requirement is authenticity. The adjudicator must know the dance tradition well; he must be or have the assistance of a scholar. Folk dance has social and educational uses but serious study must precede application. A festival is not an end in itself, it is merely a new function for tradition and a means of popularization.

KENNETH S. GOLDSTEIN: How do you decide how one group is better than another? If people do not compete at the folk level, why should they compete in an artificial festival context?

ROGER PINON: Competition gives the dances value among the population and builds up an appreciation of the authentic. We judge the dances also "as a piece of art." No matter how authentic, it cannot be bad dancing. But authenticity is the most important criterion.

SARAH GERTRUDE KNOTT: The questionnaire the National Folk Festival Association sent to the embassies indicates that Belgian festivals feature mainly international dances. Have your festivals lost the proximity to tradition which we are attempting to keep in the United States?

ROGER PINON: In Belgium there are four federations: two are Flemish and two Walloon. In each region one is international in orientation and one is scholarly and revivalistic. When the four were brought together, about 1964, none gave in: the educationalists remained

hasty, the revivalists careful in their approaches to folk dance.

ARTHUR SCHRADER, Old Sturbridge Village, Massachusetts: Old Sturbridge Village began in 1946 as an open air museum devoted to New England life of the 1790-1840 period. In 1950 a full-time research program was begun which presently has a staff of five. There is also a curatorial staff concerned with research on artifacts. There is a music program designed to study the kinds of music which were available to New Englanders during our period. We have prepared indexes and cross indexes of the music which was published and are setting this information against Anglo-American folksong collections. Darwin Kelsey is making a study of New England farm life of the period which will result in monographs on stock, tools, and implements. He is using a wide variety of early primary sources including six questionnaires distributed in New England in the early nineteenth century.

ROGER PINON: Many of the old crafts survive in our society to fill certain needs; tool handles, for example, are often still hand made.

JOHN DILDINE, Accokeek, Maryland: The National Colonial Farm has been established in southern Maryland; it will be a working eighteenth century Tidewater farm. The architecture of the farm is now being planned. This fall a seminar on colonial agriculture will be held at the Smithsonian Institution; it will deal more with genetics than agricultural techniques. The National Colonial Farm does not as yet include any folklife programs but this is because none have been proposed. The Accokeek Foundation has published a report and made a film strip on the Farm.

C. RICHARD BEAM, Department of Foreign Languages, Millersville State College, Pennsylvania; Historic Schaefferstown, Inc.: Schaefferstown possesses about 100 of Thomas R. Brendle's field note books. We hope to edit and publish these as a survey in ten or twelve full sized volumes of Pennsylvania German folklore. I will be at the University of Marburg for the next few years working on the European background of Pennsylvania German folklore. Some have the feeling that there is little left to be done with Pennsylvania German traditions, but much work still needs to be done by "a younger generation with a less romantic and more scholarly orientation."

JOHN R. BRENDLE, Reinholds, Pennsylvania, Historic Schaefferstown, Inc.: Historic Schaefferstown also envisions an outdoor museum like Old Sturbridge Village with a working farm and active craftsmen. Schaefferstown has a distinctive folk culture worthy of presentation. It was settled at an early date by Jews and aspects of the Jewish culture persist as part of the Pennsylvania German folkways. "In my own family, for instance, there was one particular dish used for pot pie and nothing else. That was it. That was the pot pie dish and you didn't put chicken in it. And, in midweek the table was set in the dining room. That was always closed and the plates

turned upside-down with a clean table cloth spread over it, so that it was ready for use. This, of course, is a Jewish tradition."

DON YODER, Department of Folklore and Folklife, University of Pennsylvania; Pennsylvania Folklife Society: The Pennsylvania Folklife Society publishes Pennsylvania Folklife which began as a weekly in tabloid format in 1949. I have a topical article index of the first sixteen volumes about half completed. The current issue has articles on museum and restoration work, preserving architecture in York, a museum in a Pennsylvania - influenced section of Ontario, broadsides, and reminiscences. "I am interested in historical sources for folk-life studies, not only in interview and questionnaire techniques where we get contemporary materials in people's memories about folk culture, but I'm concerned to use the European historical approach as well in our folklore and folklife archives to get as much historical depth in looking at regional American folk culture as is possible. So, in editing Pennsylvania Folklife I have tried to accent the historical sources."

HENRY GLASSIE, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; Pennsylvania Folklore Society: The Pennsylvania Folklore Society publishes Keystone Folklore Quarterly. When it began in 1956, Keystone was slim, mimeographed and included much in the way of nearly worthless rewritten legends. It is now offset printed with a healthy number of illustrations and an emphasis on modern data collected within the Middle States. In the past year, Keystone has included such diverse material as a large collection of New York State children's lore, legends of a middle class Negro family from Philadelphia, vernacular dance, songs from Maryland, a pair of articles on the classification of jump rope rhymes, a history of maple sugar technology and the first in a series of articles on folktales from western Pennsylvania which will run through this year into next. The current volume will include an introduction to folklife by Alexander Fenton, articles on traditional basketry, proverbs in John O'Hara's writings, water dowsing, place names, folk furniture, tunes of the Child ballads, folk settlement types, riddles, Polish songs, and an extensive bibliography on the use of questionnaires.

CHUCK PERDUE, Washington Folklore Society: The Society was started three years ago. We have a regular newsletter and hold a monthly program which has "had everything from concerts to Bruce Buckley lecturing on folklife research." Members of the Society have been collecting in the Washington area from both Negroes and whites who have migrated from the South.

PETER O. WACKER, Department of Geography, Rutgers University: My primary interest is in house types - dwellings, barns, outbuildings and more ephemeral structures such as the barracks used to store hay. The folk house types built before 1850 can be used to establish cultural geographic regions. These regions are still clear in New Jersey despite urbanization. The house types are being studied

through nineteenth century newspaper advertisements and fieldwork supported by a research grant from Rutgers. This research indicates that the I house and spring house are early, the Pennsylvania "bank barn" late. One of our graduate students, Mike Gordon, is studying house types in an attempt to delineate the boundary between the Tidewater and the upland South in southern Virginia.

EUGENE J. WILHELM, JR., Department of Geography, McGill University, Montreal: I have been doing fieldwork in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia and North Carolina in connection with the National Park Service and the Historic American Buildings Survey. We have been studying not only buildings but implements and handicrafts as well. Last year the Canadian government started a national survey of architectural types beginning at the seaboard and progressing westward.

PETER O. WACKER: Are either of these surveys planning to type their data?

E. J. WILHELM: Yes, first regionally and then nationally.

PETER O. WACKER: Will all the data be mapped out?

E. J. WILHELM: Yes, both in the United States and Canada.

WILBUR ZELINSKY, Geography Department, Pennsylvania State University: "I am in the preliminary stages of what promises to be a quite rewarding, but difficult study of the geographical significance of the morphology of the 'Pennsylvania town.' I have good reason to suspect that the villages and cities that prevail in much of this state and portions of neighboring ones are quite distinctive in physical aspect. It is my hope that the exploration of this matter will yield some material of basic theoretical value for the cultural geographer as well as much data on architecture and related items that might be of value for the Ethnic Culture Survey."

JOHN B. BRENDEN: I am making a detailed survey of the place names of "my own little township of West Cocalico in Lancaster County and I think maybe this will help throughout the state if you can get enough people to do it I have better than one hundred names with all the legends associated with them, and this I am going to coordinate on a map and give to the Ethnic Culture Survey to have fun with."

EDWARD PINKOWSKI, Philadelphia: "I've written a book on Chester County place names and I have another completed on Montgomery County place names that I should have published at the end of this year, and I've completed another on Wayne County place names, and I have over two thousand cards on place names in Pennsylvania."

C. RICHARD BEAM: Pennsylvania German is spoken in Ontario and about twenty states in this country. There are many variations in the dialect. I have been working for some time on a dictionary of Pennsylvania German.

HILDA A. KRING, Slippery Rock Area School District; University of Pennsylvania: I am working on a dissertation entitled, "The Harmonists - A Folk Cultural Approach." From material preserved at Old Economy and taped interviews with older people connected with the Society, I will construct a picture of the Harmonists, their architecture, dress, religion, work and play, music, and society.

RICHARD D. WETZEL, University of Pittsburgh: My dissertation will be a study of the music of the Harmony Society. My master's thesis dealt with a collection of American hymn and tune books housed at the Pittsburgh Seminary Library.

EDWIN F. WESELY, Chevy Chase, Maryland: I am conducting a tape-recorded survey of folk culture in the Potomac Valley with particular emphasis on the C and O Canal.

CHARLES E. WELCH, Department of Languages and Social Sciences, Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science: "I am currently collecting material on all aspects of the Mummers' Parade, including pictures, tapes, newspaper material and personal interviews. I would like to share information with others from various sections of Pennsylvania to see if there was ever a similar celebration in other towns. I know for a fact that the 'Fantasticals' paraded in Easton in the 1820's so why not elsewhere?"

RALPH RINZLER: During May the Smithsonian is going to make a film of a traditional north Georgia potter, Cheever Meaders, who was written up by Allen Eaton in 1934, and appeared again last summer in an article in Crafts Horizons. I would like to hear from all who are working on folk pottery.

ARTHUR SCHRADER: One of the Old Sturbridge Village Staff is planning to write a master's thesis on the pottery business in New England during our period.

EDWARD PINKOWSKI: All the projects we have discussed have dealt mainly with the immigrants who arrived before the nineteenth century. "I am an American of Polish background and I'm interested in writing about Polish people in Pennsylvania, but I have had difficulty in finding the material. I have had to do my own research There should be some effort made to arouse some interest, to begin programs, research grants for people who are expert in gathering material in this field to go into these nonEnglish speaking groups to draw this material out." We should study the numbers of the ethnic groups and locate their churches.

PETER WACKER: "Wilbur Zelinsky at Penn State has written several articles on the distributions of various congregations in the United States."

EDWARD PINKOWSKI: It must be done on a state level.

PETER WACKER: "Even the house types have not been mapped out very well. All of this is really pioneer work."

SARAH GERTRUDE KNOTT: In the Pittsburgh area, Dick Crum, a Slavic specialist, has organized an important folk festival stressing ethnic traditions.

PENN ELIZABETH SCHRADER, Sturbridge, Massachusetts: Ruth Crawford Mitchell, who is responsible for the nationality classrooms at the University of Pittsburgh, conducted ethnic surveys in western Pennsylvania years ago.

EDWARD PINKOWSKI: The ethnic groups will be more willing to cooperate with the new Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission survey than with an individual.

ARTHUR SCHRADER: Thelma James has done excellent work with ethnic traditions in Detroit. Dr. Clifford Lord in New York and later in Wisconsin worked with the various national groups and has students working with ethnic traditions now in Buffalo.

EDWARD PINKOWSKI: "I'm particularly interested in my ethnic background I think there should be this interest on the part of other groups to get information on their background to the Ethnic Culture Survey collection in Harrisburg to make it available to students."

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When the open morning session closed those in attendance went to lunch, after which they were entertained by Mrs. Olabelle Reed, traditional singer and instrumentalist who was born in North Carolina's Blue Ridge and now works and lives near Oxford, Pennsylvania. She sang the songs which are part of her family tradition as well as a couple of her own composition. She was accompanied by Mr. Burl Kilby, banjo picker from Sugar Creek Tennessee via southeastern Pennsylvania.

The afternoon session began with the brief business meeting of the Pennsylvania Folklore Society. Kenneth Goldstein, outgoing president, bade us a cheerful farewell, and Hyman Richman, treasurer, reported financial stability. MacEdward Leach was elected president and Mac E. Barrick vice president of the Society.

Four papers were read in the afternoon:

Don Yoder, "The Discovery of the Pennsylvania Germans."

Mac E. Barrick, "Lewis the Robber in Life and Legend."

Richard E. Buehler, "Stacker Lee: A Partial Investigation into the Historicity of a Negro Murder Ballad."

Eugene J. Wilhelm, Jr., "Folk Settlement Types in the Blue Ridge Mountains."

The papers read by Richard B. Buehler and E. J. Wilhelm will appear in Keystone Folklore Quarterly; those of Don Yoder and Mac Barrick will appear, presumably, in Pennsylvania Folklife.

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In the spring of 1968 another meeting will be held to which all with an interest in folk culture from the Middle States region will be invited. I would like to hear from you with suggestions as to how our meeting could be better and would like to hear from any who would be willing to give a paper. Also, I would be happy to answer any questions about the Ethnic Culture Survey.

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